

Indonesian Female Labor Migrants: Experiences Working Overseas (A Case Study Among Returned Migrants in West Java)

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Abstrak

Since the 1980's there has been a growing phenomenon in Indonesia of women moving out to work overseas. The main destination countries of this movement is Saudi Arabia, but some other countries in the Middle East, such as Abu Dhabi< United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar have also important destinations in recent years. There are strong economic factors influencing labor migration such as dearth of job opportunities in the areas of their origin. However, the phenomenon in Indonesia has other important dimensions. The majority of Indonesian female labor migrants to Saudi Arabia work as domestic workers. Many of them had bad as well as good experiences working overseas in terms of how employers treated them. This paper is an elaboration on Indonesian female migrant workers' experiences working in Saudi Arabia based on a study among returned migrants in their places of origin in Indramayu and Cianjur districts in West Java. West Java is known as one of Indonesian provinces where many international female labor migrants to the Middle East came from. The many cases of mistreatment and bad working experiences among Indonesian returned female migrants in the study area do not seem to deter a number of them to work in Saudi Arabia. Some returned female migrants in the study area believe that what they would experience during their work overseas depended on their fate.